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Regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights has been prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/105 of 4 December 2000, and contains information on the action taken pursuant to that resolution. The report focuses on the regional strategies of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the most significant developments since 2000.

Mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights have been established at the African Union (the former Organization of African Unity), the Organization of American States and the Council of Europe. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has established its own mechanisms.

In order to maximize the impact of the activities of the United Nations at the national level, the Office of the High Commissioner has been systematically pursuing a regional and subregional approach through a variety of complementary means and methods, in particular by supporting the establishment of regional frameworks for the promotion and protection of human rights, adopting a subregional focus wherever appropriate, outposting regional and subregional representatives, concluding cooperative agreements with United Nations agencies and regional institutions, undertaking joint regional projects, and sponsoring or organizing consultations and dialogues.

* A/57/150.

** This report is being submitted on 7 August 2002 so as to include as much updated information as possible.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 55/105 of 4 December 2000, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-seventh session a report on the state of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights, and to include therein the results of action taken in pursuance of that resolution.

2. Mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights have been established within three regional organizations: the Organization of African Unity (OAU, now the African Union), on the basis of the 1981 African Charter on Human and People's Rights; the Organization of American States, on the basis of the 1948 American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man and the 1969 American Convention on Human Rights; and the Council of Europe, on the basis of the 1950 Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has established its own mechanisms to promote and protect human rights.

3. The Assembly, in resolution 55/105, welcomed the continuing cooperation and assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the further strengthening of the existing regional arrangements and regional machinery for the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular through technical cooperation which is aimed at national capacity-building, public information and education, with a view to exchanging information and experience in the field of human rights. It also welcomed, in that respect, the close cooperation of OHCHR in the organization of regional and subregional training courses and workshops in the field of human rights, high-level governmental expert meetings and regional conferences of national human rights institutions, aimed at creating greater understanding in the regions of issues concerning the promotion and protection of human rights, improving procedures and examining the various systems for the promotion and protection of universally accepted human rights standards, and identifying obstacles to ratification of the principal international human rights treaties and strategies to overcome them. The Assembly stressed the importance of the programme of technical cooperation in the field of human rights, renewed its appeal to all Governments to consider making use of the possibilities offered by the United Nations under that programme of organizi information or training courses at the national level f government personnel on the application international human rights standards and t experience of relevant international bodies, and not with satisfaction the establishment of technic cooperation projects with Governments of all regions.

4. Further, the Assembly welcomed the growi exchanges between the United Nations and the bodi created by the United Nations in accordance with t treaties dealing with human rights, on the one han and regional intergovernmental organizations, such the Council of Europe, the Organization for Securi and Cooperation in Europe, the Inter-Americ Commission on Human Rights and the Afric Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, on t other. The Assembly also welcomed the appointme by the High Commissioner of human righ personalities to serve as regional advisers, who wou play a significant role in the promotion of human righ and human rights advocacy through the design strategies and the development of partnerships f human rights, facilitate coordination of human righ technical cooperation in the region and assist region cooperation at large, for example, among nation institutions, parliamentary human rights bodies, b associations and non-governmental organizations. T Assembly recalled in that regard the positi experience of the presence of OHCHR in southe Africa, which would serve as guidance in t development of the regional approach of the Office.

5. The Assembly, in resolution 55/105, noted wi interest the programme for Africa of OHCHR and t objective of strengthening cooperation between th office and OAU (now the African Union) with a vi to reviewing, on a regular basis, human rights needs the various subregions. The Assembly also noted wi interest the further developments in the implementati of the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperati for the Asia-Pacific Region, which was enhanci technical cooperation in the promotion and protecti of human rights in the region. It took note with inter of the Quito Framework for Technical Cooperation the Field of Human Rights, which served as a basis f the regional strategy of OHCHR and aimed strengthening national capacities for the promotion human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean. T Assembly welcomed the continued cooperati between OHCHR and regional organizations in Euro

and Central Asia, in particular in the development, as a priority, of a regional approach to preventing trafficking in persons.

6. The present report focuses on the regional strategies of OHCHR and the most significant developments since 2000, when the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly the previous report on the subject (A/55/279).

II. Regional strategies of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

7. Progress in protecting and promoting human rights depends primarily on actions taken at the national level — actions that are directly linked to the full application of the provisions of core international human rights treaties. However, in order to maximize the impact at the national level of the activities of the United Nations, OHCHR has been systematically pursuing a regional and subregional approach through a variety of complementary means and methods, including, in particular, the following:

(a) Supporting the establishment of regional frameworks for the promotion and protection of human rights;

(b) Adopting a subregional focus wherever appropriate;

(c) Outposting regional and subregional representatives;

(d) Concluding cooperative agreements with United Nations agencies and regional institutions, undertaking joint regional projects, and sponsoring or organizing consultations and dialogues.

8. The Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation for the Asia-Pacific Region, the first arrangement of its kind, was established by the Governments of the region at Tehran in 1998, when agreement was reached on the four pillars of the Framework, namely, elaboration of national plans of action in the field of human rights; establishing and strengthening national institutions; promotion of human rights education; and strategies for economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development. The most recent two-year programme of action under the Framework, adopted at Beirut in March 2002, focuses in particular on activities at the subregional and national levels, as well as on the important role of civil society and of regional and United Nations partnerships in the implementation of activities in these four areas.

9. In 1999, the Governments in the Latin American and Caribbean region adopted the Quito Framework for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, with five pillars: those of the Framework for the Asia-Pacific region, and a fifth pillar concerning the protection of vulnerable groups. A number of activities were undertaken in Uruguay in 2001 for the MERCOSUR (South American Common Market) subregion, in Peru for the Andean region, and in Argentina for the Latin American and Caribbean region as a whole, as part of the implementation of the Quito Framework.

10. The International Conference on Human Rights and Democratization, held at Dubrovnik in October 2001 in partnership with the Government of Croatia, the European Commission, the Council of Europe and OSCE, stressed the particular importance of providing support to the fledgling civil societies in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, strengthening the links to United Nations standards and mechanisms and developing national plans and infrastructures for human rights as well as human rights education activities.

11. In Africa, OHCHR efforts are focused primarily on a subregional approach in southern, Central, East and West Africa. Consultations and dialogues on priority issues have been initiated with Governments and various sectors of African society, including politicians, lawyers, academics and civil society institutions. The African regional dialogues held at Geneva and Arusha in, respectively, November 2001 and May 2002, produced tangible results, providing guidance to Governments, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations and better links with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Union, and other subregional organizations.

12. OHCHR has developed projects of cooperation with several Arab countries of Western Asia and North Africa and has identified several key issues of common concern, including human rights awareness-raising, civil society networking and training, and the need to translate human rights training materials into Arabic. A

joint regional project with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on these issues is now in operation.

Outposting of regional and subregional representatives

13. The placement by OHCHR of regional representatives began recently with the establishment of presences in two subregions (that of the Southern African Development Community at Pretoria and that of the Economic Community of Central African States at Yaoundé), as well as at the regional commissions for Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, Western Asia and Africa. The locating of OHCHR regional and subregional representatives are at Santiago, Bangkok, Beirut and Addis Ababa allows for closer working relationships with States, United Nations country teams, international and regional organizations, and non-governmental organizations.

Cooperative arrangements with United Nations and regional organizations and institutions

14. The development of new relationships, in particular with regional organizations and institutions, has been a major focus of OHCHR action. A number of memorandums of understanding have been concluded in the past few years — such as with UNDP, the regional commissions and, more recently, with the League of Arab States in the second quarter of 2002. These arrangements have resulted in concrete practical collaborative efforts that facilitate the integration and mainstreaming of human rights into the work programmes of OHCHR partners.

III. Regional frameworks

A. Africa

15. As part of the process to develop a coherent human rights strategy for the African region, OHCHR undertook several activities aimed at supporting the former OAU in the promotion and protection of human rights.

16. From 5 to 7 November 2001, OHCHR organ a consultative dialogue at Geneva on the th "Human rights, the African Union and the Partnership for Africa's Development", which bro together African governmental representatives, governmental organizations, community-b organizations, academia, subregional econo organizations and human rights experts from continent and the diaspora. One of the objectives o dialogue was to support OAU in the consulta process for the establishment of the African Unio the one hand, and NEPAD, on the other. The dial was organized in close collaboration with the secretariat, the Economic Commission for Africa the African Commission on Human and Peop Rights.

17. In order to address the root causes of conflict to prevent the resurgence of new conflicts, State central Africa deemed it appropriate to pro practical respect for human rights and democracy in 1994, requested the United Nations to establi subregional centre devoted to developing suc culture.

18. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/ of 1 December 1999, the High Commissioner Human Rights established, in cooperation with Department of Political Affairs of the United Nat Secretariat, the Subregional Centre for Human Ri and Democracy in Central Africa at Yaoundé. mission of the Centre is to:

(a) Contribute to training personnel respons for the management of activities relating to hu rights and democracy;

(b) Provide support for the creation an strengthening of national institutions responsible human rights and democracy;

(c) Cooperate in the dissemination of international instruments relating to human rights democracy.

19. Since beginning its operations in March 2001 Centre has been developing partnerships with United Nations agencies working in Cameroon Central Africa (e.g., International Labour Organiza United Nations Development Fund for Women), relevant bilateral and multilateral partners, rese institutions (e.g., Institute of International Relatio Cameroon, Catholic University of Central Afr

national institutions (the Centre supported the activities of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms of Cameroon by providing assistance to the joint mission of the Commission and non-governmental organizations to the prisons at Bamenda, Bafoussam and Douala), and civil society (the Centre organized, from 16 to 18 July 2001, a subregional programme for non-governmental organizations engaged in the gender issue, as part of the preparations for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance).

20. The Centre has organized subregional seminars (a workshop on human rights education in Central Africa in March 2001, and a workshop on the development of national plans of action in the field of human rights on 18 and 19 December 2001); supported national and international conferences linked to its activities (a national conference on human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, held from 24 to 30 June 2001), and a conference preparation for the World Conference against Racism, held at Dakar from 20 to 23 June 2001); and assisted in capacity-building through its fellowship programme.

21. Its activities are developed within the framework of the OHCHR strategy for Central Africa and the Great Lakes region, with the main goal of contributing to the emergence of a culture of human rights and democracy by sharing best practice nationally and internationally, and complementing the actions undertaken at the national level. The Centre established a documentation centre in November 2001 and also publishes a newsletter on human rights and democracy.

22. In June 2002, the High Commissioner officially launched the Subregional Centre during the conference of ministers of justice and presidents of supreme courts of States of the region, hosted and organized by the Centre for the purpose of discussing the submission of reports according to international human rights treaties.

23. The Centre develops its activities in cooperation with the general secretariat of the Economic Community of Central Africa States. In July 2002, a memorandum of understanding for joint cooperation in areas of human rights and democracy was signed between the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General of the Economic Community. This agreement enhances the cooperation between both institutions, enabling them jointly to undertake periodic consultations and effect technical cooperation.

24. A workshop on economic, social and cultural rights in the southern African region was held by OHCHR at Gabarone, from 3 to 5 December 2001. The 34 participants from 12 countries in the subregion represented Governments, national human rights institutions, national HIV/AIDS commissions, non-governmental organizations and regional and international organizations, including the Southern African Development Community. The International Labour Organization, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, UNDP, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) were represented at the workshop. The focus of the workshop was on HIV/AIDS as a human rights concern, given the prevalence of the disease in the subregion, and sessions were allocated to group discussions and simulation exercises on monitoring and reporting under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

25. On 10 December 2001, the High Commissioner marked International Human Rights Day at Addis Ababa. During her visit, the High Commissioner held extensive discussions with the Secretary-General of OAU on human rights issues of mutual interest to both institutions. As part of the strategy to strengthen the human rights component of OAU activities, it was agreed that OHCHR would deploy a human rights officer to work with the various organs of OAU (now the African Union) at Addis Ababa. The human rights officer will be supervised by the OHCHR regional representative to be based at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa.

26. In the context of its new strategy for Africa in the field of human rights, OHCHR organized at Banjul, from 17 to 19 December 2001, a workshop on the building of national and subregional capacities for the promotion and protection of human rights in the West Africa subregion. The principal participants of the workshop were governmental officials, delegates of national human rights institutions, representatives of non-governmental organizations which are active in the subregion, and representatives of the Economic Community of West African States and the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights.

27. OHCHR has continued to support the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Following the evaluation in March 2002 of the assistance provided to the African Commission since its

establishment, OHCHR envisages a new cycle of cooperation.

28. The High Commissioner participated in the OAU summit meeting, held at Durban, South Africa, in 2002, during which she held discussions with key African leaders. OHCHR organized a workshop in parallel with the summit meeting as a means of stimulating discussions on the human rights component of NEPAD.

29. As a follow-up to the African dialogue held at Geneva in November 2001, OHCHR in collaboration with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, organized the second African dialogue at Arusha, from 24 to 26 May 2002, which had as its theme "Promoting justice and reconciliation in Africa: challenges for human rights and development". This dialogue brought together human rights experts and policy makers on the continent, governmental representatives, lawyers, judges, human rights activists and international observers. As with the first dialogue, the second afforded an opportunity for OHCHR (including its field offices) and the Tribunal to share their activities and experiences with participants. The dialogue was inspired by the ongoing process for the establishment of the African Union and the implementation of NEPAD. Discussions focused on the objectives and mission of these laudable initiatives and offered strategic input on how the perceived impediments to the achievement of their set goals could be overcome.

30. At the end of the dialogue, participants adopted far-reaching conclusions and recommendations which will form the basis for a number of activities to be undertaken by OHCHR in the near future.

31. OHCHR signed a memorandum of understanding with the Economic Commission for Africa in July 2001 and with the Economic Community of Central African States in July 2002.

B. Arab region

32. During the past decade, civil societies throughout the Arab region have become more and more aware of the increasing importance of human rights issues. There are now some 50 non-governmental organizations in the 22 countries of the region that are currently active in human rights protection, awareness-raising, education, legal assistance, research and victim rehabilitation. At the same time, the development of national human rights institutions and ministerial bodies demonstrates the increased attention paid by Governments to the necessity of promoting and protecting human rights.

33. In response to these positive developments and also to numerous requests for assistance from Arab Governments, Arab national and regional non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies in the region, OHCHR has strengthened its relationship with these organizations, while human rights mainstreaming has led to joint activities between OHCHR and other United Nations agencies. In July 2001, the High Commissioner regrouped all OHCHR technical cooperation activities in the Arab world under a single unit, the Arab Region Team, which is located within its Activities and Programmes Branch.

34. In addition, the High Commissioner, in March 2002, appointed two regional representatives of OHCHR, both based at Beirut. One is working closely with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia with a view to providing the necessary advice on human rights in the context of the Commission's mandate, and integrating a rights-based approach into its development policies and technical cooperation projects. Both regional representatives will provide advice to member States in the formulation of human rights plans of action, relevant legislation and the establishment of national human rights institutions, and provide technical support and guidance to all components of civil society in the Arab region in order to improve their institutional and operational capacities and enhance their catalytical role in human rights promotional, awareness and protection activities. Strategic relationships will be also developed with United Nations country teams in the region, especially within the framework of rights-based planning and programming, and in the identification, devising and implementation of best practice. The two representatives will also enhance the OHCHR strategy for the Arab region through regional projects, by providing technical assistance in the field of human rights and through their participation in various international, regional and national conferences and workshops. This should facilitate the creation of linkages with a wide range of Arab regional partners, with a view in particular to enhancing the process of ratification of international human rights instruments and ensuring the compatibility of constitutional and local laws therewith, assisting in the reporting process to treaty bodies and developing training schemes.

C. Asia and the Pacific

35. Pursuant to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, the Office of the High Commissioner has been further developing regional cooperation for human rights in Asia and the Pacific. Annual workshops on regional cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights in Asia and the Pacific were organized at Bangkok in 2001 and Beirut in 2002. Through these and prior workshops (in particular the workshops held at Amman in 1997, Tehran in 1998, New Delhi in 1999 and Beijing in 2000), a consensus was reached on the principles of the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation for the Asia-Pacific Region. The implementation programme of the Framework is based on a step-by-step, building-block approach, involving, inter alia, consultations among Governments concerning the possible establishment of regional human rights arrangements.

36. Intersessional workshops and meetings were held as follows: workshop on the role of national human rights institutions in advancing the rights of women, Fiji, May 2000; subregional north-east Asia workshop on parliamentarians and human rights (jointly organized by OHCHR and the Inter-Parliamentary Union), Mongolia, August 2000; fifth annual meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, New Zealand, August 2000; workshop on national institutions and economic, social and cultural rights, the Philippines, November 2000; workshop on the impact of globalization on the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development, Malaysia, May 2001; two workshops for the Pacific States on the ratification of international human rights instruments, Marshall Islands, March 2001, and Samoa, December 2001 (jointly organized with UNDP); workshop on the role of national human rights institutions and other mechanisms in promoting economic, social and cultural rights, Hong Kong, China, July 2001; sixth annual meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, Sri Lanka, September 2001; subregional workshop for judges on the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights in South Asia (jointly organized with the International Commission of Jurists and the International Bar Association), India, November 2001; subregional workshop for Pacific States on human rights education and the administration of justice, Fiji, June 2002; workshop on the role of national institutions regarding media and human rights education, Australia, July 2002; and ninth workshop on regional cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asian and Pacific region, Bangkok, March 2001.

37. In the conclusions of the workshops, participants expressed their commitment to enhancing regional and international cooperation in order to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms, while reaffirming that the primary focus for the protection and promotion of human rights is at the national level. Note was taken with appreciation of the decision of the High Commissioner to appoint OHCHR regional representatives for the Asia-Pacific region, based at Bangkok, and for the Arab region, based at Beirut. With regard to national human rights plans of action and national capacity-building, participants recognized the desirability of incorporating plans, as appropriate, to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance as a component of national human rights plans of action. With regard to human rights education, participants encouraged Governments to promote the development of national strategies for human rights education that were comprehensive, participatory, effective and sustainable. Further, they noted that priority should also be given to human rights education for those involved in the administration of justice. With regard to national human rights institutions, participants encouraged greater cooperation among national human rights institutions, non-governmental actors, civil society and United Nations agencies with mandates relevant to the protection and promotion of human rights. They reaffirmed that the status and responsibilities of national institutions should be consistent with the principles relating to the status of national institutions adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993. With regard to the realization of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights, participants affirmed the importance of the human rights treaty system in providing a legal framework within which States parties might address the positive and negative impact of globalization. Finally, participants welcomed the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (see A/CONF.189/12, chap. I) and decided to include the implementation of the Programme of Action as an

integral part of the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation for the Asia-Pacific Region.

38. In the conclusions, participants endorsed the Programme of Action for the Asia-Pacific Framework for Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, which is to be implemented over a two-year period (2002-2004), subject to the availability of resources from the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights. The Programme of Action has as main objectives under each of four pillars:

(a) Gathering of lessons learned and best practice in the region and development of tools for the development of national plans of action;

(b) Strengthening of national capacities for human rights education with a focus on the incorporation of human rights education within the school system;

(c) Provision of support for regional initiatives to strengthen the role of national institutions and their regional association in the Asian and Pacific region;

(d) Strengthening of national capacities to develop the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights.

39. In February 2001, OHCHR concluded a memorandum of intent with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, which called for the appointment of a human rights regional representative to be located at the Commission's headquarters in Bangkok, and for the strengthening of cooperation with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations in the region. This initiative builds on the experience gained since the convening of the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, which recommended that human rights officers be assigned to regional offices of the United Nations. The representative took up his functions at Bangkok in January 2002.

40. During the two-year period under review, the High Commissioner's Adviser for Human Rights Technical Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific, Justice P. N. Bhagwati, continued to advise the High Commissioner, to represent her at high-level meetings and to undertake other special assignments in the region.

D. Europe

41. In Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus, OHCHR continued to intensify its cooperation with regional organizations, including the Council of Europe, OSCE and the European Union, and also increasingly with prominent regional civil society organizations and networks, such as the International Helsinki Federation. The Council of Europe, OSCE and the European Union were key participants in the International Conference on Human Rights and Democratization (see para. 10 above) and was an opportunity for Governments, regional organizations, national institutions and representatives of civil society to review developments in the field of human rights in the region. The regional organizations provided substantive input into the discussion and conference conclusions, which, inter alia, encouraged OHCHR, the Council of Europe, OSCE and the European Commission to intensify their cooperation in the field of human rights and democratization. Civil society organizations from the region also took this opportunity to engage the Office in discussions on substantive issues and technical cooperation projects.

42. OHCHR, the Council of Europe and OSCE maintain high-level contacts on a regular basis, including through their annual tripartite meetings. During the meeting in February 2002, the heads of the three institutions reviewed human rights concerns in the region and agreed that each would include in its training curricula and materials information on standards and procedures of both the European and universal human rights systems. The Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Alvaro Gil-Robles, and the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of OSCE, Gerard Stoudmann, addressed the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-eighth session, held at Geneva from 18 March to 26 April 2002. In May 2002, the High Commissioner for Human Rights participated in the 110th session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe held at Vilnius, where she addressed a number of issues of common concern, including the question of human rights and anti-terrorism, and also renewed discussions with the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe on ways to strengthen cooperation between the two offices. In July 2002, the High Commissioner addressed the OSCE Permanent Council at Vienna, paying tribute to the work of OSCE in ensuring the

implementation of regional human rights commitments, and touching upon the situations in South-East Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus. She also addressed the issues of human rights and terrorism, human rights defenders and trafficking in human beings.

43. The High Commissioner's Regional Adviser for Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus, Thomas Hammarberg, conducted several meetings with representatives of regional organizations at Dubrovnik, Strasbourg, Vienna, Warsaw and the field during 2001 and 2002, with a view to strengthening inter-office cooperation and identifying priorities in joint strategic planning. As a result of such contacts, the High Commissioner and the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights formalized arrangements to expand the nature and depth of collaboration in countries of Europe, Central Asia and North America by means of an exchange of letters in May 2002. They appointed senior and working-level contact points, tasked with the determination of priorities, the review of accomplishments on a semi-annual basis and with providing continuous liaison and cooperation in priority areas. Highlighted areas of cooperation include the issue of human rights and terrorism; technical assistance programmes in Central Asia and the South Caucasus; human rights training throughout the region; and strengthening of national human rights institutions and ombudsmen. Similar arrangements between OHCHR and the Council of Europe are also in effect.

44. In November 2001, the High Commissioner, the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe issued a joint statement on human rights and terrorism, in which they urged that measures to eradicate terrorism not lead to excessive curbs on human rights and stressed that some rights may not be derogated from under any circumstances. They called on all States to ensure that measures restricting human rights in response to terrorism strike a fair balance between legitimate concerns of national security and fundamental freedoms, consistent with their commitments under international law. Finally, they offered to provide technical assistance to States that are developing legislative responses to terrorism.

45. Working-level consultations on human rights issues continue to be held between OHCHR and the two regional organizations, both at their respective headquarters and in the field. Inter-agency consultations on developments in Chechnya, Russian Federation, take place on a regular basis among OSCE, the Council of Europe, OHCHR and other organizations. OHCHR works with OSCE, the Council of Europe and other organizations in the Gender Task Force and the Trafficking Task Force of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. Objectives of cooperation include the development of a common regional approach and the promotion of legal frameworks to prevent trafficking and provide protection to victims. OHCHR, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the United Nations Children's Fund jointly issued, in June 2002, a report on trafficking in human beings in South-Eastern Europe, prepared within the framework of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. The report presents the current situation and responses to trafficking in the countries of the subregion. In April 2002, the Council of Europe and OHCHR co-sponsored a panel discussion on the theme "Combating trafficking in human beings — a European convention?", on the occasion of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Council of Europe also provided useful input to the forthcoming recommended principles and guidelines on human rights and human trafficking, under preparation at OHCHR.

46. The Council of Europe and OSCE are key regional partners in the follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. The Council of Europe organized a follow-up meeting at Strasbourg in February 2002, and OSCE participated in meetings convened at the European level in the lead-up to the Conference. In June 2001, the latter's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights convened a meeting at Vienna to consider how better to promote tolerance and non-discrimination in the OSCE region. Representatives of OHCHR, OSCE and the Council of Europe take part on a regular basis in regional meetings organized by the three institutions, which provide an additional opportunity for an exchange of views and joint planning.

47. OHCHR continues to coordinate and implement its country activities in consultation with OSCE missions and Council of Europe information centres in the field. OSCE field missions provided valuable

support and advice to an OHCHR subregional needs-assessment mission to Central Asia in the second quarter of 2002. It is expected that any future OHCHR activities in Central Asia will emphasize close coordination with OSCE field presences. In June 2002, OHCHR organized a workshop for civil society on strategies for the promotion of women's participation in public life at Skopje, in cooperation with the Council of Europe Information Centre at Skopje and the Equality Division of the Council. Together with OSCE, OHCHR continues to operate a human rights office in Abkhazia, Georgia, which is part of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia.

48. The High Commissioner holds regular consultations with the European Commissioner for External Relations, Chris Patten. OHCHR has numerous funding arrangements with the European Commission in support of its field presences and technical cooperation projects, such as a project on supporting rights-sensitive transitional justice arrangements in post-conflict and post-crisis countries, which was started in June 2002.

E. Latin America and the Caribbean

49. Following consultations with Member States and national, subregional and regional institutions and experts in the field of human rights from Latin America and the Caribbean, OHCHR organized a regional workshop at Quito from 29 November to 1 December 1999, which adopted the Quito Framework for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights. Participants in the workshop represented Governments, national human rights institutions, networks of non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies and regional institutions. The Quito Framework has served as the basis for the regional strategy of the Office of the High Commissioner.

50. The long-term aim of the Quito Framework is to strengthen national capacities for the promotion of human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean through: (a) the development of national plans of action for the promotion and protection of human rights; (b) human rights education; (c) the establishment or strengthening of national human rights institutions; (d) the development of strategies for the realization of the right to development and of economic, social and cultural rights; and (e) the promotion of the human rights of women, children and vulnerable groups.

51. OHCHR has provided training in the area of reporting obligations for Spanish-speaking and English-speaking countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (e.g., in Guyana in 1999 for English-speaking countries and in the Dominican Republic in 2000 for Spanish-speaking countries). From 27 to 29 August 2002, OHCHR will conduct the first pilot workshop on the concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee at Quito, in which several Governments, national institutions and non-governmental organizations will participate.

52. In mid-2001, OHCHR initiated an eight-month regional project under the Quito Framework. This project identified and permitted the exchange of best practice and strengthened national human rights infrastructure aimed at:

(a) Developing regional and subregional initiatives to advance strategies that promote economic, social and cultural rights;

(b) Protecting the human rights of vulnerable groups;

(c) Promoting ratification of and accession to international human rights instruments;

(d) Encouraging the application of international human rights instruments by national courts;

(e) Devising a regional strategy by enhancing collaboration with OHCHR partners in the region.

53. As part of this regional project, OHCHR convened a subregional workshop on national human rights plans of action for countries in the Andean region at Lima, from 16 to 18 July 2001, which was attended by governmental representatives from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, as well as representatives of national institutions and non-governmental organizations. As a result of the workshop, the Government of Peru issued a decree entrusting the national council of human rights with the task of drafting guidelines for the adoption of a national human rights plan of action.

54. A subregional workshop on the application of international human rights instruments by national courts and tribunals, held at Montevideo from 22 to 25 October 2001, attracted some 30 participants, including representatives of Governments, legislatures, the

judiciary, national institutions and non-governmental organizations of countries members of MERCOSUR. A regional workshop on the elaboration of strategies for the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights was held at Buenos Aires, from 24 to 27 October 2001. Some 30 participants, including governmental representatives from concerned ministries or institutions, national institutions and non-governmental organizations, attended. The High Commissioner attended both workshops in an effort to strengthen cooperation and encourage follow-up to the World Conference against Racism.

55. Three training workshops on the problem of domestic violence were held for the police of Panama (Panama City, 5-9 October 2001), Uruguay (Montevideo, 15-19 October 2001) and Paraguay (Asunción, 22-26 October 2001). Participants included trainers from the police academies, commanding and operational police officers and, in Paraguay, representatives of non-governmental organizations. During the three workshops, a draft training manual was tested and revised.

56. In collaboration with the Red de Apoyo, a network of non-governmental organizations working on human rights education in Latin America and the Caribbean, OHCHR held a workshop at Caracas, from 12 to 17 October 2001, to assist in preparations for the Conference on Human Rights Education for Latin American and Caribbean Countries, which was held in Mexico in November 2001 and organized by OHCHR and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in collaboration with about 40 representatives of non-governmental organizations and a representative of the Government of Venezuela.

57. On 6 and 7 December 2001, several human rights experts met at Geneva to help to develop the OHCHR strategy for the region. OHCHR also held a workshop on disabilities, in collaboration with the national institutions of Peru, at Lima, from 4 to 7 December 2001, with the aim of training staff of national institutions on the rights of people with disabilities and on the procedures for the implementation of Peruvian law in regard to these persons. In addition, a seminar on human rights and disabilities was held from 3 to 5 December 2001 for staff of the Peruvian Ombudsman's office, in cooperation with the Latin American Institute for Crime Prevention and the Treatment of Offenders and the Defensoría of Costa Rica.

58. The above-mentioned activities were implemented in close collaboration with the following partners: the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights (for the Montevideo and the Buenos Aires workshops), the Latin American Institute for Crime Prevention and the Treatment of Offenders (for the subproject on training on domestic violence), the Andean Commission of Jurists (with which the Office of the High Commissioner had signed a memorandum of understanding in 1998), Red de Apoyo, UNESCO and the national institutions of Peru and Costa Rica. UNDP also played an active role in these activities.

59. As a step towards developing a specific approach for the English-speaking Caribbean, OHCHR held a consultation with United Nations and other international and regional partners from the region from 28 to 31 May 2002. As a result, OHCHR gained an up-to-date appreciation of the human rights situation in the region and identified the potential and means for further activities specific to the subregion.

60. A seminar for Latin American and Caribbean experts was held in Mexico from 1 to 3 July 2002 and was opened by the High Commissioner. The seminar provided a forum for the exchange of ideas on how to move forward in implementing the Programme of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

61. Between 8 and 12 July 2002, OHCHR carried out a mission at the headquarters of the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in Washington, D.C., with the aims of identifying concrete areas for cooperation with the Organization of American States, agreeing on the implementation of joint activities in the Latin American and Caribbean region and of improving coordination between regional and United Nations human rights mechanisms.

62. At the national level, OHCHR has technical cooperation projects in Brazil, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru, and also has a regional representative at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean at Santiago. OHCHR maintains a field office in Colombia and also provides assistance to the thematic rapporteurs who visit the region and to the independent expert for Haiti.

63. OHCHR signed a memorandum of understanding with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in December 2000.

IV. Conclusion

64. **The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will continue to pay special attention to the development or strengthening of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights, and will continue to report on the results of the action taken in that respect, in response to the decisions and guidance received on this subject by the General Assembly.**